

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Re-examination and favorable reconsideration in light of the above amendments and the following comments are respectfully requested.

Claims 29 - 56 are pending in the application. Currently, claims 29, 31 - 34, 36, and 37 stand rejected; claims 30, 34, 35, 38 and 39 stand objected to; and claims 40 - 56 stand withdrawn from consideration.

By the present amendment, claims 29, 30, and 33 have been amended.

In the office action mailed July 23, 2007, the Examiner objected to the drawings. Appropriate corrections to the drawings have been made. The Examiner is hereby requested to approve the replacement sheets of drawings.

Further in the office action, the Examiner objected to the specification. Appropriate correction has been made.

Still further in the office action, claims 29 - 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph; and claims 29, 31 - 34, 36 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,192,145 to Rixen et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,775,259 to Shell.

The foregoing rejections are traversed by the instant response.

With regard to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, appropriate amendments have been made to the claims. The metes and bounds of the claims are now believed to be clear and antecedent basis has been provided for all claim terms.

With respect to the rejection on obviousness grounds, claim 29 as amended is believed to be allowable for the following reasons. Claim 29 is directed to a connecting device comprising a clamping screw and a sleeve for connecting a first workpiece

having an interior space to a second workpiece, the clamping screw having a shank which engages in a longitudinal groove of the first workpiece and which can be inserted into an opposing element in an interior space of the second workpiece, wherein the shank of the clamping screw passes through the sleeve, said sleeve is provided with outer ribs and is fixed in the longitudinal groove of the first workpiece such that a threaded area of the clamping screw protrudes beyond a face of the first workpiece and is provided with a screw head at a distance therefrom, wherein the threaded area of the clamping screw has a nut screw head which can be fitted thereon, and said screw head is designed such that said screw head can be inserted into an undercut longitudinal groove of the second workpiece, and wherein the sleeve has at least three groups of said outer ribs which are parallel to a longitudinal axis of the sleeve, which said outer ribs, in a fixing position, are assigned to radial grooves in a groove bottom and in facing surfaces of the longitudinal groove on rib shapes which delimit a profile side face. It is submitted that this subject matter is not obvious over the combination of Rixen et al. and Shell.

A review of the Rixen et al. patent shows that it fails to disclose three groups of outer ribs parallel to a longitudinal axis of a sleeve. While the Shell patent may disclose ribs, it does not disclose a sleeve. Thus, it does not cure the deficiencies of Rixen et al. Shell discloses a shaft with one group of outer ribs. The shaft of the Shell device is permanently joined to a connector as can be seen in FIGS. 15 and 16. Consequently, Shell does not disclose providing ribs on a sleeve. It is submitted that the combination of Rixen et al. and Shell would only lead to a modification of the shaft of the

screw 14. No modification to a sleeve is suggested by either of the cited and applied references.

Furthermore, with regard to FIG. 19 of Shell, it must be acknowledged that the connector device 80 can only be inserted into the space 37 in the case that merely exactly one single group of ribs 88 is provided on the connector device 80. The ribs 88 of Shell are not exactly in line. If Shell had more than one group of ribs, it would not fit into the space 37. This is because the space 37 has only a single narrow opening in which the ribs 88 of Shell engage as shown in FIG. 21. In other words, Shell can not in any event be modified by a further group of ribs as this would destroy the functionality of Shell's device. Consequently, the examiner's assumption that one skilled in the art would design the ribs into three groups of ribs is wrong in light of Shell. More than one group of ribs is forbidden by the disclosure of Shell.

In particular, there is no hint to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide exactly "three" groups of ribs as it is not apparent from Rixen or Shell how many contact locations are needed.

In summary, neither of the cited and applied references discloses three groups of ribs. Thus, the subject matter of claim 29 is not rendered obvious by the cited and applied references.

Claims 31 - 34, 36, and 37 are allowable for the same reasons as claim 29 as well as on their own accord.

For the foregoing reasons, claims 29, 31 - 34, 36 and 37 are believed to be allowable.

The Examiner is thanked for the indication that claims 30, 35, 38 and 39 contain allowable subject matter.

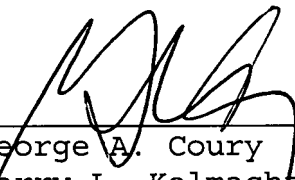
Should the Examiner believe an additional amendment is needed to place the case in condition for allowance, the Examiner is hereby invited to contact Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

No fee is believed to be due as a result of this response.

If any additional fees are required in connection with this case, it is respectfully requested that they be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-0184.

Respectfully submitted,

WINFRIED K.W. HOLSCHER

By 
George A. Coury
Barry L. Kelmacher
BACHMAN & LaPOINTE, P.C.
Reg. No. 34,309
Attorney for Applicants

Telephone: (203) 777-6628 ext. 112
Telefax: (203) 865-0297
Email: docket@bachlap.com

Date: October 23, 2007

I, Karen M. Gill, hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service, first class mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to: "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313" on October 23, 2007.

